

Moments in Our History

(Excerpts from the Dissenting Church of Christ at St. John's 1775 – 1975)

A Sufficiency of Land (Part 4)

In the spring of 1787, the replies, all carefully copied into the journal, arrived. They were not too encouraging. The Reverend Simon Reader of Wareham was fully engaged in paying for renovations to the Swanage Meeting House. His most generous contributor had declared himself an Arian (if not also a Socinian) and thus was no help. He forwarded the petition to London, and found the liberal gentlemen there “too full of attempts to spread the Gospel in England.” The St. John’s church joined the list of worthy causes but, alas, “yours could not be answered in less than three years.” Dr. Stafford was of the opinion that they should re-new the lease and that Jones should come himself to plead the case in England. The Reverend Mr. Mends of Plymouth, writing for his father as well, answered in like vein. Peter Geddies, a sergeant in the Royal Artillery, on the advice of the Reverend Mr. Piercey of Woolwich, also thinks that Jones should come himself. He feels that the Whitfieldites “despite our differences” might help. Sergeant Geddies had persuaded his own pastor, a Mr. Turner, “to help with his pen.”